

Mother Clelia completes 100 Years

Homily of Fr. Sergio Giordani SDB

1. "The Lord said to Abram, go from your country" (Gen. 12:1).

Abraham was 75 years old when, obeying God's command, he left Haran and set out with his entire family towards an unknown land.

To begin salvation history, God did not choose a young man full of vitality. He chose Abraham, a person full of years.

What did Abraham learn?

He learned to trust. He left without knowing exactly where was the land which God had asked him to go to. He left holding tight to the promise God had made to him "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Gen 12:2).

The model of biblical faith is an elderly person. The elderly, with their perseverance, assure us that God is faithful to His promises.

Thank you Mother Clelia, through your perseverance you tell us: trust in God, trust in God always.

2. A young man from the Solomon Islands, present at the 2019 Youth Synod, said that the Church is a canoe. We can say that the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Ann is a canoe.

A canoe, the young man said, on which the older people help to keep the route, interpreting the position of the stars and the younger people row with strength, imagining what awaits them further on.

Thank you, Mother Clelia, with your gaze turned to the sky, you show us the route towards which to orient the bow of our navigation.

3. The song, which we read in the Gospel and which we recite every morning at Lauds, came from the heart of an elderly person: Zechariah.

Zechariah was convinced that the increase of years would prevent any novelty from breaking into his life. The announcement of an angel of the Lord "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son" (Lk 1:13) was such a surprise that he lost his speech.

When the surprise comes true, Zechariah recovers his speech and prophesies. Zechariah senses that his little story is part of a higher and bigger plan. Zechariah blesses the Lord who always fulfills His promises.

The word that sums up Zechariah's discovery and feeling is mercy.

Zechariah rereads the history of his people: "He has shown mercy to our fathers and remembered His holy covenant, the oath He swore to our father Abraham" (Lk 1:72-73). He recalls that God's mercy freed the people enslaved in Egypt and that God's mercy brought the exiles back from Babylon to Jerusalem.

Zechariah reads the present with his gaze towards the future: "Through the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will visit us" (Lk 1:78).

Dear Mother Clelia, today along with you, we express our gratitude for God's mercy, but with our gaze towards the future. Zechariah's experience tells you and us that, as long as we can recite his song every morning, it means that there is still something of this life that we must live and something that we must continue to wait for.